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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 806

Offered January 19, 2001

Establishing the Joint Fiscal Accountability Commission.

Patrons—Ware, Black, Drake, Hargrove, Harris, Katzen, Marshall, Nixon, O'Brien, Parrish and Suit;
Senators: Martin, Rerras and Watkins

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the part-time "citizen legislature" is an integral part of Virginia's history and an institution that the General Assembly is committed to continuing into the twenty-first century; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly is equally committed to promoting the full and open consideration of issues, increasing public accessibility to the legislative process, and fostering the most efficient use of the limited resources in the budget; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the workload of the General Assembly has grown in magnitude, scope and complexity, increasing the amount of time members must deal with legislative affairs; and

WHEREAS, the baseline budget of the Commonwealth of Virginia has increased and grown dramatically during the past several years, to the sum of a \$50 billion biennial budget; and

WHEREAS, a budget of this size, scope and complexity requires the detailed and comprehensive supervision of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, while the budget is drafted and approved based on the most accurate fiscal and budgetary forecasts available during the brief legislative sessions, data may change in response to changing economic conditions subsequent to the session; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia provides, in addition to state-run agencies, extensive funds to private organizations and groups to advance legitimate state interests and the public policy goals of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly, while not exercising daily supervision and control of these private organizations and their operations, nevertheless retains its constitutional obligation and mandate to exercise sound stewardship of state funds on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, this sound stewardship requires that a full, complete and accurate accounting of the spending of state funds be made by any private organization that receives funding from the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, this type of detailed, comprehensive oversight of spending would require a significant amount of time and attention outside the normal legislative sessions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Fiscal Accountability Commission be established. The Commission shall undertake a detailed analysis of the operations and expenditures of state funds by private organizations and groups, for the purpose of demanding a full, complete and accurate accounting of those funds, as well as demonstrable evidence that the public policy goals have been accomplished by their expenditure. The Commission shall study and recommend what policies and strategies can be instituted or restructured to more efficiently and effectively spend said funds, as well as make recommendations for the cancellation of programs that fail to meet the stated purpose of their funding, or fail to provide a satisfactory accounting of their expenditures.

The Commission shall be comprised of 18 members as follows: six members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, in accordance with the principles of Rule 16 of the Rules of the House of Delegates; four members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections; and eight citizen members, four of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House and four of whom shall be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The study shall include, but not be limited to, the authority to call before the commission representatives of the state-funded organizations to provide an accounting, as well as the authority to compel testimony, discovery and production of financial records and documents of any and all private organizations receiving state funds.

The direct cost of the study shall not exceed \$33,000.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission upon request.

The Joint Fiscal Accountability Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Senate and House Finance Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee, by the 2002 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

INTRODUCED

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58 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
59 Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the
60 study.